

In Memoriam
Robert Goldschmidt
1868 - 1942

In Memoriam

Robert Goldschmidt

Born in Berlin 1868 – Perished in Treblinka October 1942

Dedicated

To my sister Brigitte, my cousins Marion, Yvette, Léo, Paul, Sylvia and René.

Written, edited and translated by Renata Goldschmidt Propper

PREFACE

My grandfather hardly ever wrote letters. This was my grandmother's job, keeping in touch with the whole family. However, having reread the few letters he wrote between my grandmother's sudden death August 1941 and his deportation in May 1942, I thought that they deserve this little publication to honor him. We should remember him and not forget the pain of losing, first their home of forty years, his beloved wife, followed by the horrors that awaited him at the end of his life.

Referring to the latter I quote from Vassily Grossman's book **The Hell of Treblinka:.....**"it is infinitely painful to read this. The reader must believe me when I say that it is equally hard to write it. Why write about it then? Why recall such things? It is the writer's duty to tell the terrible truth, and the **reader's civic duty** to learn this truth. To turn away, to close one's eyes and walk past is to insult the memory of those who perished."

Inspired by these lines I feel it is my mission to share my grandfather's last letters with the rest of the family and whoever else might be interested. While the letters per se are neither remarkable nor profound, they breathe and project that specific atmosphere of rapidly changing circumstances, tightening of rules, in short, the accelerating disaster of the Hitler regime. In his first letter, Bob is announcing the death of Daisy, his wife of forty-two years, to his five sons, all of them having escaped abroad. Only Erich's fate was still unclear. Now a widower, he is obliged to take pen or pencil, writing himself, maintaining the only contacts left to him, my mother and my other grandmother Berty. Only one

letter to Mädi was found in our home, destroyed by the Russian plundering, but those to Berty survived in Vienna. It is especially his last letter, written a **few hours** before he set out on his last journey into the unknown that is so moving and devastating. My grandfather was 74 years old, upright, in good health, except for a slight limp, leaving with two suitcases, a backpack (*Rucksack*) on his shoulders and his ever-present cane in his hand. Rosa, our beloved cook, who stayed with him and cared for him most of his life, helped him to pack. One can only imagine their feelings. Even so, they had a last argument about a copper bowl, used for beating egg whites, which she was loath to part with, and he thought would be useful for washing. She yielded, and it was strapped to his backpack. Thus he left, and none of us ever saw him again.

Relatives

Mädi	My mother.
Berty	Berty von Heintschel Heinegg, Mädi's mother.
Wolfgang	Wolfgang von Heintschel Heinegg, Berty's husband, Mädi's father.
Hans	Their son, in prison from July 1941, executed in December 1944.
Evi	My mother's sister.
Louise	My mother's youngest sister, living with her husband Max Feilchenfeld, later Heinegg in the US.
Daisy	Bob's wife, née von Goldschmidt
René	My father.
Erich	Bob's youngest son.
George	George Hallam, Berty's brother.
Hermann	Hermann Goldschmidt, Bob's youngest brother.
Bursch	Hermann's son, wounded in the war.
Guetia	Guetia (Marguerite) Goldshcmidt, Alfred's wife.
Alfred	Alfred Goldschmidt Bob's brother.
Karl	Karl Mayer. Bob's widowed brother in law.
Rosa	The beloved cook.

A Short Biography.

Robert Goldschmidt was born in Berlin, June 10th 1868, the eldest son of Hermann Benedict Hayum Goldschmidt (1832-1886) and Ottolie, née Przibram (1843- 1923), daughter of a wealthy textile industrialist in Prague. The Goldschmidts originally came from Frankfurt am Main. However, Hermann, wealthy by inheritance, first settled in Berlin, where he was involved in banking. The family left Berlin in the late seventies because of growing anti-Semitism, settling his family in the more liberal atmosphere of Brussels, where many of his descendants still live today. He and his wife bought a town-house, 70 rue de la Loi, where Ottolie, known as *Bonne Maman*, lived until 1923. After her death her wonderful, substantial art collection was sold at auction in Amsterdam. Since her husband Hermann was one of thirteen siblings, my grandfather had more than one hundred first cousins. Robert had six siblings: sister Gabrielle (Yella), married to Jacques Demeure; André, married Marthe Morren, a famous beauty; the twins Alfred and Victor. Alfred married Marguerite, called Guetia, Brodsky, daughter of a sugar magnate from Kiev; Victor, married Stephanie Halot, who bred and loved poodles. Bob's favorite sister Therèse (Kra) married the distinguished politician Paul Hymans, who became Belgian foreign minister, from 1927-1940. Hermann, the youngest of the family, kept the BH attached to his first name. He married an Austrian, Gerda Schey von Koromla, and settled in Austria, acquiring a castle Schloss Erla, a converted convent, with a church attached to the house. This property is still in the possession of the family. (Austria then, was the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which included the kingdom of Bohemia and Moravia.)

Bob, as Robert was known all his life, studied at the French Lycée, followed by an agriculture college, in order to manage properties he was to inherit from his mother's relatives who died without succession. Liblin, a castle built in the 18th century in western Bohemia's forest region called the *Böhmerwald*, was another large property owned by his mother's family, and eventually inherited by Bob. It is there, where Bob acquired his love of country living, his passion for forests and hunting. Most of his brothers entered city-bound professions, but Bob became a country gentleman not a usual occupation for a Jew at the time. There must have been visits to Prague and Brussels, we know little about. But when he married in 1900, he was a handsome, self-assured and experienced man of thirty-two. I seem to remember my mother telling me that Bob was exiled to Liblin for a whole winter, being punished for some escapade. He ordered a case of detective stories and stayed mostly in bed! There is a reference to this in one of his last letters: "in the Nineties I spent many winters alone in the country; and this was the time during which there was **no** shooting or hunting, the closed season (January to April); Rosa took care of me then as she does now, so well again." One wonders whether there was more to this? Rosa, a tiny but fierce lady, must have been a pretty young girl then! She was our fabulous cook. I still remember her food, her unsurpassed desserts. She stayed with my grandparents in exile, sleeping in a dark, cold attic-like room (*komora*) although she had her house in the village, often spending her own money to supplement my grandfather's meagre funds. Rosa was our cook ever since I remember as a child. Bob was also the designated heir to Taikowitz and Tuleschitz in Moravia, belonging to his mother's relatives, Sophie Dormitzer and Emilie von Schnapper. It is there where he eventually settled.

It was therefore logical, that at some point Bob, a good-looking, tall, eligible and attractive bachelor, showed up in nearby Vienna, where the

Przibrams had a large house on the Ring, to look for a wife. In the social calendar of Daisy von Golschmidt, he appears the first time on March 2, 1899, at "dinner and après", at her home, Opernring 6. Daisy must have seen him at many of the ongoing parties and she fell in love with him right from the start. How was she to arouse Bob's interest? Daisy soon found out about Bob's hunting passions, and set about to learn the intricate vocabulary of huntsmen, in order to impress "her chosen" Bob. Daisy von Goldschmidt was a very distant relative, from a different line of Goldschmidts. Her grandfather Moritz von G. was ennobled by the Emperor Francis Joseph in 1864. He was a prominent and esteemed banker, married to Nanette Landauer, established first at Opernring 6 and later at a summer residence in Döbling where they lived in retirement. Daisy was an orphan (with a substantial dowry!), losing her parents early, living with a much older sister, Monika. Opernring 6 was a family mansion with uncles and aunts on every floor, very near the Court Opera, on the Ring Boulevard. Bob and Daisy participated in the active social life of mutual friends, meeting throughout the month. In Daisy's social diary Bob appears again in December of the same year, already as a bridegroom. Shortly after, their wedding was celebrated in the Synagogue in Vienna on March 20, 1900. From then on, their lives proceeded together until her death in 1941.

It was Daisy's ardent wish to become a Catholic. Assimilation was in the air, Jews thought of themselves as Austrians, were patriotic as any other citizens. Bob fulfilled Daisy's wish, all the more as he was responsible for the local church upkeep, being the *Patronatsherr*. They were baptized in September of the same year, and Daisy from then on was a devout Catholic for the rest of her life. She respected Bob's decision of not going to church on Sunday and being served meat on Fridays. I think the conversion did not change anything in Bob's

emotions. He was not religious, but considered himself a Jew. The name Goldschmidt spoke for itself and he was not somebody to pretend. However, all sons were brought up as Catholics, which did not prevent the Hitler regime to consider them as Jews. (We as children, however, relished those Sunday trips in a horse drawn carriage, to mass in nearby Běhařovice, followed by a visit to Leo's tomb at the nearby cemetery. Leo, my mother's fiancé, was killed in a car accident in June 1927, before she married my father one year later.)

At the time of their marriage, Bob was still maintaining his mother's Bohemian property Liblin, where they spent their honeymoon. Family gatherings, mixed with social entertaining, with focus on shooting, continued there until Bob sold Liblin, in order to consolidate his properties in Moravia. Two colored glass windows in the Liblin church still bear the names of Daisy and Robert Goldschmidt as a remembrance. Taikowitz was being renovated for the young couple, while an uncle and aunt still resided at Tuleschitz. Frequent afternoon visits are mentioned in Daisy's diary simply as "visited uncle and aunt".

In 1900 Bob was thirty-two years old, he knew what he liked and wanted. He was exceptionally intelligent, original and enterprising. Full of original ideas, he was an independent man, witty and articulate in his conversation. He loved a good discussion and arguments. Above all, he had the natural authority of an executive. Unquestionably, he was, as one says in German: "*Der Herr im Haus*" ("the master"), nobody questioned his authority. When something irked him, he could have a fierce temper, feared by the children and servants. However, these thunderstorms passed as quickly as they came. Basically a kind and just man, he was generally liked in the village. One day, our coachman after dropping off guests at the nearby Znaim (*Znojmo*) station, stopped at a tavern

for a couple of beers. His wife at home wondered what took him so long; suddenly she heard the sound of hoofs in the courtyard and saw the horses making their rounds, as was their habit of cooling down. However, no coachman! He returned sheepishly on foot later on. When my grandfather heard

the story, he only laughed: "I did not know that we had such intelligent horses...."

There are also Stázi's (our nanny's) comments: "He was a kind tolerant landlord". He knew most people in the village, many of them in his employ. Our nurse kept telling us this story: "one day she and my grandfather were looking out of the window (it must have been one of his rare visits to our nursery). They saw a man from the village sneaking by, with a bundle of wood on his back. My grandfather turned to Stázi "I know they steal my wood, but there is enough for all of us". Stázi later mentioned: "he was a good man with a pure soul". She was the first among the people who brought food to his exile in the woods. During the "fat years" before WWI my grandparents generously contributed to the village festivities. Every Christmas they distributed packages and one *Crown* to all school children.

Bob dedicated himself to maintaining his inherited lands (cca 6000 Hectars) with genuine devotion, interest and knowledge, experimenting with novel ideas in agriculture. His great love, however, were his forests, his passion for the Jagd (shooting and hunting). Most of my grandparents' social life consisted of shooting parties at home or with friends. Endless entries in Daisy's day-by-day diaries mention *Jagd*....mentioning the region at home, usually Czech names, or elsewhere with friends. There was a lot of entertaining, the house buzzing with friends. I include a photo of an outdoor picnic during such

a shooting party.

Greatly interested in innovations, new machinery was bought, electricity introduced not only in the castle but in the whole village, by a newly built generator, creating a dam, with water from our river Rokytná, long before electricity was introduced by the State. He took great interest in cultivating his wide and fertile fields, carefully observing the harvests, carrying samples of wheat, corn, oats in his pockets. We had our own mill and a factory for processing sugar beets, a mud-place to bake bricks. A large yard, called "Maierhof" near the castle, a U-shaped compound with large stables for horses and cows, pigsties, chicken coops etc. and a two story granary. Small houses for the coachmen and farm workers stood at each end. Many of their children went to school with us. The *Maierhof* was a place we loved to visit as children, visiting the animals, showing them to guests. Nothing smelled better to us than the stables! There was another building nearer to the castle, where the coaches were kept, smaller ones for one horse, bigger ones for a pair and a closed one (coupé) for the winter, when one sat in a fur-lined "sack" with a muff to protect one's hands. The highlight was to glide along the snowy roads in our sleighs, little bells attached to the horses to break the stillness of winter and announce our approach. Sunday, we usually drove to church, and I was sometimes allowed to sit next to the coachman and hold the reins.

Before WWI Bob and his growing family lived in grand style. Their sons were educated at home, first with English nannies, later with tutors, speaking German, French and English equally well. They took their examinations in Vienna, at the Benedictine high-school (*Schottengymnasium*). They soon participated in the sport of hunting. Long evenings were spent playing all sorts of social games, bridge being the preferred one. One sat down for meals three

times a day, lunch, tea (*Jause*) and dinner. Until the very last years, everybody changed for dinner, often into long dresses. Outdoor life was determined by the season. While men went shooting, deer-stalking, women and children went for long walks. The country around Taikowitz provided an enormous variety of walks, some with no purpose at all but for the pleasure to be surrounded by high evergreens, or walking along the river on lovely meadows. But more often we gathered wild flowers early in the spring, berries in the summer; hunting for mushrooms became a sport! Life in the country was comfortable, leisurely and social, pivoting around the shooting season. It was a happy united family life, with visits of our Belgian relatives, as well as Daisy's sister and good friends from Vienna. The guest book from Taikowitz still exists, a silent witness of a time long gone.

The young couple, after a short honeymoon in Prague and Liblin, settled in Taikowitz, living first in what was known as the Villa, while renovations were done in the castle. The old Biedermeir building was adorned with four ungainly turrets, along with some useful modernizations: bathrooms, WC etc.. Bob was eager to resume his country life, avoiding cities as much as possible, till the end of his life. Once installed there, for what they thought would be the rest of their lives, their existence was focused mostly on taking care of their land and their growing family.

After their wedding, Daisy wrote in her diary: *Ça y est!!* They must have been happy together, although one wonders how Daisy managed to change from the pleasant, carefree life of a debutante to the demanding role of a chatelaine: she was in charge of a large household, a big flower and vegetable garden, lording over a huge staff that enabled them to entertain guests and family on a large scale. It could not have been always easy, all the more so since

she very soon became pregnant, eventually filling the nearby nursery with six sons. Soon English nannies were added to the household, as well as Daisy's own nanny Mrs. Marshall. Daisy had her personal maid Marie, a morose Viennese, who showered my grandmother every morning with cold water in her tin tub, and later combed her hair. "*Frisieren*" took time, she even wrote letters during this administration! Marie reigned in the downstairs lingerie, while the cook who appeared each morning to discuss menus, had her own staff in the kitchen and adjoining pantries. The staff had their own dining room not far from the kitchen, while my grandparents' dining room was a floor above and a long corridor away.

Prewar holidays were often spent in Ostend, where Bonne Maman Ottolie reunited children and grandchildren. There was a family legend, that Bob indulged in clay pigeon target shooting, never bothering to look at the sea. After a financial windfall, the family rented *Proschenhof*, a shoot in Styria. Two wonderful photos survived. Among the most favorite places to visit friendsand to shoot, was *Kővecses*, belonging to Daisy's good friends the von Schey family. It is there, as a young girl of seventeen, she discovered her love for country living. Some letters, written to her mother-like sister Monika, have survived, Daisy raving about her gay holiday, praising the advantages of outdoor country living. Once married, these visits continued and the friendship between the two families still exists today!

The First World War changed a lot of that. Most important, the Austrian Monarchy, on the losing side, was dissolved at the treaties of Trianon and Versailles. Taikowitz was now part of the newly founded Republic of Czechoslovakia, and the family became its citizens. My grandmother, an ardent monarchist, disliked the newly elected President Thomas G. Masaryk, beloved by the Czech population. The political atmosphere of the country changed, but

life in Taikowitz continued, the sons were growing up: young men, spending more time in Vienna. In 1927 tragedy struck the family. Leo, their third son, was killed in a car accident. He was an exceptionally mature, intelligent and promising young man, heading for an interesting business career. My grandparents were devastated, and banned automobiles from their lives. The day of what would have been his next birthday Bob gave this moving speech:

“Today we should be celebrating our poor Leo’s twenty-third birthday. As in past years, he would have had his place of honor at this (*Jagd*) hunting party. However, destiny decided differently. I have, in the midst of this hunting ground, which one day should have belonged to him, erected these stones to remember and to honor him.

And so we will continue in the coming years to remember our dear and merry hunting companion (“*Waidgenosse*”) who is not amongst us any more, but who we feel is sharing our joys and sorrows.

Time will weather these stones, as it will soothe our pain. Wild plants will grow around these stones, as we huntsmen love it. In the spring blue forget-me-nots, in the autumn red falling leaves and in the winter the snow that covers all, will keep us aware, in silent devotion and remembrance.”

Leo had been engaged to a young Viennese girl, Annemarie (Mädi) Heintschel Heinegg. After attending the funeral, she became ill, staying a few weeks in Taikowitz. A strong bond developed between her and my grandmother. The letters Daisy wrote to her in the following months read like love letters. Mädi, who did not get along with her own mother, liked to be in Taikowitz, where she was lovingly welcomed by all the Goldschmidts and continued to visit. In the spring of 1928 she became engaged to René, my father. Daisy was in seventh heaven, and Mädi, her favorite daughter-in-law. Here is the letter Bob wrote to Mädi's father:

Schloss Taikowitz

11 April 1928

Dear Wolfgang,

Today Mädi and René surprised us with the news that a few days ago they promised to share their lives. I believe you will feel the same joy about these news that have inspired us. I don't need to tell you how happy Daisy is to see her beloved Mädi united with René. For the first time, since those awful days last June, that I have seen her happy. I believe to assure you that there are all conditions *Voraussetzungen*) that Mädi and René are going towards an active and secure future and I hope that our home also will become Mädi's home, will welcome you often and that you will spend pleasant days in our forests, even though they are not as blue and breezy as the Bohemian forest. (*Böhmerwald*). Many cordial wishes from us all to you all,

sincerely yours,

Bob Goldschmidt

A small wedding took place in the summer, in St. Wolfgang in Austria. The young couple started out living in a separate wing of the castle, which my father was to inherit one day. However, the promised security eluded my parents' lives. After the crash of 1929 Bob and his family became steadily poorer. War loans, land reforms (confiscation beyond an allowed limit), and other reversals reduced their fortunes and some of their life style. But even so, as a child I remember at least six or seven people to help, plus gardeners, and no shortages in food. There were however, some economical measures in heating the big house. The grown sons left one by one, looking for employment elsewhere, or

pursuing new careers in art. Tuleschitz was sold, and in Taikowitz the banks were supervising my grandfather's management. So it happened that my father **René** was obliged to take a job elsewhere. He started working for friends, the wealthy sugars barons Friess Redlich, and was obliged to move together with my mother to Brünn (*Brno*). My father spent the war in England, in the Czech division of the British Army. Returning to us in 1945, he tried to build up a new existence. However, after the Soviet takeover in 1948, we all left, this time for good. He and my mother settled first in England, but after a short painful time together, they divorced. My father remarried, and spent the rest of his life with his wife Eva von Thuroczy in Montreal.

Arhur, the eldest son, married Gabrielle Thorsch, daughter of the Viennese banker Alphonse Thorsch. They started out living in Tuleschitz, my Grandfather's second property, a few miles away from Taikowitz, participating constantly in the close family life. After my grandfather's financial reversals, the property had to be sold. Arthur and his family moved first to Mährisch Ostrau (*Moravská Ostrava*) and later to Prague. They left in 1939, escaping the Nazi regime, emigrating to Canada. They had two daughters, Marion and Yvette who spent many summers with us in Taikowitz. Both of them live in the US.

Ernst Goldschmidt (1906-1992) studied art history in Vienna, before moving in 1933 with his Dutch wife Zus de Vries to Brussels. He was briefly involved in the Royal Museums, but soon founded a publishing company (*Editions de la Connaissance*) that issued art books, as well as periodicals, most notably "Quadrum" in four languages, of international repute. He also organized exhibitions, mainly at the Palais des Beaux-Arts. During WW II he served in the Free Czech Forces, bringing his family with him to England. During that time, he also organized exhibitions, mostly concerning Czech

artists. Back in Belgium, he became a prominent figure in the art world, leaving a considerable collection of 15,000 exhibition catalogues that are today housed at "MAC," the Marseilles Museum of Contemporary Art. His three children, Leo, Paul and Sylvia, are all very successful.

Niki, later (Nicholas) Goldschmidt (1908-2004) was a musician. After education as a singer and conductor in Vienna and a career first in Czechoslovakia, he left before the war for the US where he worked with Bruno Walter. During the Forties he settled in Canada, where he married Shelagh Fraser, of Scottish descent. With her support, he contributed to the development of opera in Canada, founding the Toronto Opera School and promoting Canadian artists, such as Jon Vickers. He was also active with various music festivals. (After the war we met again, but Niki became a stranger, as hardly anybody liked his new, ambitious wife. They had no children.)

Erich, the youngest son, born 1912, did not get the advantages of his older brothers. He was the most Czech of the sons, spent the war as a French prisoner of war. After returning, in poor health, he settled in *Moravský Krumlov*, where he got a government job in the administration. He married Štefi Kopečková, who cared for him lovingly. They created a contented life together, and had one son, named for my father, René.

As a result of my parents' move to town, my sister and I were often alone with my grandparents, always with our nanny Stázi, the daughter of one of my grandfather's gardeners. Our parents came home on weekends, often bringing friends with them. Winters in the thirties reduced us to a small part of the house, as the central heating installation became too expensive. Summertime brought cousins and guests, especially my mother's parents and siblings, creating thus

the link between my grandparents on each side, which became so important in Bob's last year. I retain only the best memories of our peaceful, secure childhood, cared for mostly by Stázi and my grandmother Daisy. By the time the Nazis confiscated the property, only the castle and a few hectares were left.

From my childhood I remember my grandfather sitting in a cloud of grey smoke in the back of his large dressing room, where specially designed leather chairs stood near the window, and where he received family, visitors, his foresters and administrators. He smoked about 14 cigars a day, which we children sometimes had the honor to buy at the local tobacco store. They must have been rather ordinary ones (*Regalia Media*). He appeared always dressed in the same, neat, worn country clothes-- a light shirt with tie, vest and jacket, tweed or linen according to the season, knee length trousers ("Knickerbockers"), knee-socks and ankle-high boots, looking neat and natural. I still can see him, sitting with his legs crossed, holding a newspaper in his hands, with smoke emerging behind it. To get dressed, he usually received help from his valet, particularly with the lacing of his boots. We knew him only after an automobile accident had left him with a slight limp and a dislike for cars, banning them from our lives. He always used a simple, sturdy cane. He rarely talked to us children, except during the rare absences of my grandmother. He seemed to miss her as much as we did! Nevertheless, everybody felt his strong presence.

Once the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939, abrupt changes followed rapidly. By October all my grandparents' sons, including my father, left the country, now called the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, with a weak, puppet-like President in the Hradschin palace. But the actual ruler was the SS Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, who assumed the title of "*Reichs Protektor*". In the summer of 1940 my grandparents, considered as Jews by the new rulers,

were thrown out of their home. "An eyesore" for the village, they were installed in a small game keepers house, deep in the woods. Only the head forester and the German engineer in charge of the electric works lived nearby. The latter became fatal to my grandfather, later on. Situated in the river valley, one arrived there by taking the main road and an unpaved, downhill roadway, or by walking over meadows in the back of the village and taking a steep, rocky trail, a shortcut which we usually took, a good 45 minutes from the village center. During the time my grandparents lived there, Daisy walked every day to the village, her main objective the postoffice. "No mail", was often a sad comment in her diary. At sixty-two she was a strong wiry woman, always aware of her weight, making a sport out of gathering berries, wood for the stove and mushrooms in season. Sundays she walked first uphill and then across the fields to church in Běhařovice, always visiting Leo's tomb.

At first my mother and we moved to a separate wing of the castle, but soon we had to vacate those premises as well and moved to a friend's house in Brünn. The solitary old couple did not seem unhappy in their exile, showing tremendous courage and a positive attitude. In July 1941 we came from Brünn to spend three weeks in Taikowitz, living with Stázi's parents and spending the day at my grandparents' house. The joyful remarks in my grandmother's diary indicate how much they both loved our presence in their monotonous lives. Little did we know that saying good-bye to her would prove to be the last one. In mid August she became suddenly ill and died within a few days. I remember the funeral, my first, seeing my grandfather crying, incredible to me. A long procession of villagers followed my grandfather, my mother and me. She was buried next to her son Leo, where now an "In Memoriam" is engraved for him on the tombstone. After Daisy's death my grandfather was suddenly alone, alone after forty-one years. With this moment, I leave him to speak for himself.

Graphological analysis of Bob Goldschmidt by Hans Knobloch (Oct. 1999, see his last letter in illustrations.)

"The submitted letter, as one can read, dates from the year 1942, written under the full stress/oppression of the Nazi domination. It is the last letter Bob G. wrote before his deportation to Theresienstadt, which presumably meant his death.

In view of this terrible fact, a usual kind of graphological analysis, such as observing and analyzing the character and personality traits, would mean a cold, indifferent attitude to the fate of this man; respect and reverence forbids this.

One has to say, that this handwriting without the usual diagnostic technique, as all other handwritings as well, speaks for itself, and is sending signals that touch the heart. So everybody, who with good cause refuses to say anything about handwriting, because of ignorance, can at least say whether the writing touches him or her in an agreeable (*sympathisch*) way or not. This is a simple, perhaps not very rational, but emotionally justifiable start. One can approach the writing by putting into words the emotion that this handwriting inspires. For those who have difficulties to formulate their thoughts, they can at least ask themselves questions that touch emotional depth.

However, a technical note is necessary. It could be possible that the disturbance (*Störung*) and a certain trembling of the stroke reflect the emotional state of this particulate moment. But this is not the case, as we also have a handwriting from 1928 which looks exactly the same. I was told that he used old, not always perfect pens that had to be dipped frequently into an inkpot, and did not function like our ballpoint pens today. Therefore we stay with the question

whether the writing touches our sympathy. **It does**; for the present, I can speak only for myself, because the high degree of natural spontaneity (*Unbefangenheit*) that tells us what a straightforward, direct and unpretentious man he was, while at the same time sophisticated, warm and human. He is a man who sticks to his viewpoints, which he is able to articulate with clarity, who declares his allegiances (*Farbe bekennt*) so that everybody knows where he stands and what he means.

One can simply ask oneself the simple question whether, as a granddaughter or grandson, one would have liked such a grandfather? One may also ask, whether a simple peasant would have liked to live under the dominance of such a landowner and lord of the manor?

Here I have to interrupt myself. Whoever reads my text and keeps looking at the handwriting will notice that the impression after longer observation does not fade or become boring (as is often the case), but gains in depth, kindling our curiosity. Finally, one is captivated by the radiating vitality (aliveness) of the writing.

This degree of aliveness is in the end the essence of all being and doing, so that all other questions deserve a positive answer. The impression of this precious gift of vitality is strengthened by the knowledge that this highest quality in life, was soon after cut short by the murderous hands of the Nazis."

THE LETTERS

August 25, 1941

Dear Niki,

Your Mama is no more; it is the hardest blow that could happen to us. The sole consolation that stays with us, is that she left us without suffering or feeling really sick. For me it was a bolt of lightening from a clear sky, as lately she had been better than ever. Neither I, nor the doctors, can understand how she suddenly developed an inflammation of the brain, a mystery which will linger for ever. Only last Wednesday, after her usual walk, she was in the best of mood and ate with great appetite. Thursday she complained of nausea and feeling feverish, but blamed it on having eaten too much. Since her fever was rising, I called our competent doctor who, after a thorough checkup, could not diagnose anything serious. However, the next day Mama felt no pains or nausea, but her hands and feet felt like cotton wool; she could not hold her prayer book or read as the letters danced. Since, after another visit of the doctor, her condition did not change, Mama asked to be taken to the hospital in Trebitsch (Třebíč), where the nursing would be easier. Sunday, before leaving, her back became stiff and her legs like lead. She asked me to sit her up, which was not easy. Movement had become difficult and she could hardly speak. She mumbled her prayers. After a few moments she smiled and told me: "*Du bist so lieb*" (you are so sweet). Then she became confused, talking about Mädi (*my mother*) Renate and Brigitte, and her other children; I could not make any sense of it, but knew those were agreeable thoughts as her expression was calm and smiling.

The Doctor accompanied the transport and arranged the necessary. Mädi found her on Sunday unconscious and calm. Last rites were administered. Monday brought the catastrophe.

The funeral mass was held by Father Otruba in Běhařovice; many people of our neighboring villages attended the funeral. Now she is resting near her beloved Leo, whom she visited so often. There is just one more space for me there. You must not worry about me. Mädi, who during these heavy days was constantly at my side, has lifted my spirits; I promised her to be good, to do my duty keeping up the contact with the family and taking care of myself. Physically I am well; materially, you know I am taken care of. Rosa, with the help of a girl from the village, keeps the household beautifully. Boredom I do not fear, **as I am interested in everything that is happening**, which, alas, is a lot. How this is going to end, nobody knows. Will I end my days here, or will you come one day and get me? It is in God's hand. This letter is for you and your brothers. I am convinced you will all succeed, despite the present adversities. And now that's all for today--

Papa

P.S. Please write as often as possible. Next week I am expecting the visit of Mädi's parents, who devote me a few days of their vacation. I am looking forward to their visit. Mädi promised to come in September to help me look through Mama's belongings.

Much later, we had my grandfather's name engraved on the cross of the family gravestone in his memory, with the dates of his birth and death.

September 19, 1941

Dear Niki,

Although I wrote to you just a few days ago, I feel the need today to have a little chat with you. I hope you received my two letters punctually, and that you saw from them that we are both in the same mood.

You can be reassured that I am trying to maintain my optimism inasmuch that I believe to see you all again.

Last week I had Berty's visit. Who slept two night in the kitchen. This visit was very beneficial for me; maybe she already wrote to Louise, that she found me well and that we understood each other well in our ideas. In one or two weeks Mädi will come for two days, to take care of Mama's things. I am greatly looking forward to her visit, which will probably be the last one I can expect till next spring.

Myself, I am tied to Taikowitz, but am not afraid of the winter since in the nineties I spent many winters alone in the country; and that was during the time when there was no shooting or hunting, the closed season (January to April), so not so much difference, and Rosa took care of me, as she did then, and now so well again. Then there are the memories of Mama always with me, and furthermore my thoughts constantly with you boys! When I read the news I try to guess how they will affect each of you. And so, with small domestic worries and some, in these times, inevitable annoyances the days pass relatively quickly. I don't feel the need to take walks, as I see my `former woods from my window and am pleased to see the young trees thrive. My mother and grandmother, uncle Kobi, aunt Emilie never left their house after their sixty-fifth year and still lived to be eighty and beyond.

From Erich I did not hear for a long time, and hope for an answer to my letter with the sad news. He still wrote to Mama that he is well. Uncle Karl is reasonably well, you will get all news from Louise.

I hope to see your handwriting soon, everything interests me. I wish you more success. With best greetings to you and also to Louise and Max--

Papa

Niki was my grandparents' fifth son, a musician and conductor, the first to leave Europe, initially to the US and later on to Canada, where he became very successful. Louise was my mother's sister, married to Max Feilchenfeld, later Heinegg; both of them emigrated to San Francisco, therefore in touch with Niki at that time. Uncle Karl was a widower, who had married Daisy's sister, who died of cancer in 1907. Arthur, the eldest son was in Montreal with his in-laws; my father and Ernst having joined the army in Brussels, escaped from France and spent the war years in the British army in England. Berty and Wolfgang were my mother's parents. Hans, their son, a member of the Austrian Resistance, spent four years in prison and was executed by the Nazis in December 1944.

Taikowitz, 8/25/1941

Dear Berty,

My best thanks for your sympathy telegram and also for agreeing to inform Karl of the heavy blow which has hit us all. Mädi was a great help in those grievous days; I would have been totally helpless without her. She lifted me up and I feel already today that, in spite of what I already went through recently I shall bear this worst blow with resignation. Now that Daisy is no more, I'll try to keep our once so united family together. For, when there is peace once more, we might have a Family Day yet again.

I am greatly looking forward to your visit, it will be a real comfort for me.

Best greetings to you both and also to Evi,

Bob

Berty was Mädi's (my mother's) mother.

This postcard was written after my grandmother Daisy had died. The handwriting is shaky, reflecting his shock and grief.

**Evi was my mother's unmarried sister.*

no date

Dear Berty,

Best thanks for your letter. After your departure, I had an unpleasant visit* which, however, does not seem to have led to further consequences. The new regulations aren't agreeable either. But, after feeling bad for a few days, I have now regained my equilibrium. For poor Daisy, however, it would have been extremely painful not to be allowed to go to Běhařovitz or Brünn. From Erich, I have been without news for a very long time. However, from all the other boys I hear nothing but good things. I'd be grateful, if you could find out when I may expect the next installment from the Tr.**

Best greetings to you and to Wolfgang from

your hermit Bob

*Probably Gestapo or other Nazi officials.

**There were secret, complicated money transfers via friends and family.

Taikowitz 19/11/1941

Dear Berty,

I haven't written for a long time. Mädi kept you informed and nothing much happened here anyway. Just now, I received a few lines from Mädi, who is telling me that Wolfgang wants to visit me at the end of the week, provided he gets the Permit. You know how much I am looking forward to that visit; also the goose should be ready by that time. However, I have to leave it up to Wolf, whether he dares to visit my burrow, considering the present conditions. (Which could be fumigated at any time).

Here everything is calm. I live like any other time, am well taken care of and stay away from everybody and everything, even more than before. Fanda* has left my service, because her presence was "needed" at the castle. Rosa and my neighbors help one another and this functions rather better than before.

The news from Russia don't surprise me. I expected as much. Now there's only the question how the Anglo-Saxons will manage to stay out of it and whether the world will finally come to its senses.

I face the future calmly and with composure. After all and foremost, I have good news from my boys, as well from my brothers and my sister, who already wrote me more than once.

Please inform me as soon as possible whether I may expect Wolfgang's visit and how he will manage to get here.

With best greetings,

Bob

PS: From the Treuhand A.S. I received what I have been waiting for. Many thanks for your efforts. When will Evi visit you? Have written to Karl today, how is he? Are there any chances for Hans** being released?

**The cleaning lady.*

***Hans, was the youngest son of my Heintschel Heinegg grandparents. He was studying to become a Catholic priest, when the Nazis closed all seminaries. He was in prison since July 23, 1940, when the Austrian Resistance was betrayed by an informer. He was twenty years old at the time.*

Taikowitz, 11/23/1941

Dear Berty,

I thank you very much for the last numbers of "*Das Reich*"; they happened to arrive when I had little to read and they've interested me a great deal. I also read G's article about J* and ask myself why this article had to be presented to the readers of the "*Reich*"?

I've not written to you in a long time, because there is really nothing to report from here and anyway, since you read the newspapers, you will understand how the local events have shattered my equilibrium for a while. The prospect to be forced wandering with a rucksack on my back and a cane in my hand into the Unknown is not very pleasant. Since then, however, I have regained my equilibrium; I have imagined even the worst in my mind, and am ready for anything. Just the same, there are many reasons for me to believe that everything will continue as before. I carry on as well as possible. Rosa continues to spoil me; kitchen supplies are not as easy to find as in the summer, but we manage.

I have constantly good news from my children and siblings, only Jean** had to undergo repeated surgery on his wound; but there is hope that it won't take too long. Please let me know how Hans is doing.

Mädi and I exchange letters regularly; and our relationship is getting closer all the time. It's been already two months since I saw her last. Probably it will be another four months before she ventures to my wilderness. For the last two weeks we had nothing but fog, and I hibernate often past noon. But I am utterly well ("*pumperl-gsund*") even gaining some weight. How are you all and what is Karl doing?

Many greetings

Bob

*Jews **Son of Hermann.

Taikowitz 1/2/ 1942

Dear Berty,

Many thanks for your letter. I hope you both had pleasant days in Langenlois.* I am sending you my best wishes for the New Year. Here, Christmas was very lonely; Rosa lit a very small tree for me, and under it she put the photographs of all my children and grandchildren.

I thought of all of them, specially René; whether and when I shall see them again remains quite uncertain. For the time being, I hope to manage getting the exit permit for moving to Switzerland in the spring. I am not at all sure whether that is going to be successful, on account of still unsettled tax problems. Perhaps by that time we will also have a clearer view of the war situation. Today, I don't think anyone could venture a guess how long the war will last.

From here, there's nothing new to report. Everything running at its usual pace..... I sleep and read a lot. Many thanks for the book, which I find very interesting. . Do write me soon again!

Best greetings to you both,

Bob

**A small town in the Wachau region on the shore of the Danube. My grandmother's brother George lived there with his wife Addy.*

Taikowitz 11/2/ 1942

Dear Berty,

Many thanks for your letter from the 8/2. I hope Wolf will recover soon; shouldn't he take time off in *Langenlois* and cure himself with the good country fare? Thinking of Hans, I am very sad that he has to suffer so much, hoping that relief will come with spring. Today, for the first time in six weeks, the thermometer rose above zero degrees Réaumur*. Every night it was between 12 and 20 degrees below zero.** My stove could not cope, particularly with saw dust so scarce. Therefore, I prescribed myself a rest cure, and feel excellent lying in my bed. Rosa moved to the kitchen and continues to cook very well; the food rationing isn't too bad. As a J.*** I'm used to many restrictions. Still, I am spoilt from many directions. There still exist devoted and grateful people.

I agree with you: it will take a long time before life will return to normal again. Right now, one can merely think about the nearest future and be glad to live quietly, without hunger, in one's own place. My permit to enter Switzerland has been extended to May. However, I doubt that I'll get the permit to leave. Perhaps, it is better so, since I am told that it's impossible to start a new life at my age. All the more, as I live here in isolation.

Daisy would have suffered terribly under the present conditions; I'm not sure whether you heard that J. here are not allowed to leave their domicile. I am not even allowed to go to Břežovice or in the Schamikowitz Forest which begins right behind the house.

Nothing else to report.

Best greetings to you and Wolfgang
Bob

*Réaumure was invented in France and widely used in Austria and elsewhere.

** Between 5 and -24 degrees Fahrenheit. ***J. Jew

Taikowitz 31/3 1941

Dear Mädi,

Many thanks for you letter from the 27th. I am so glad that the trip didn't harm you and that you found Hans in relatively good shape.* The distractions of Vienna must have refreshed you. The fate of poor uncle Karl is very sad, at least he has good care. I am afraid he may not recover; one does not really know what to wish for him.

The weather here has been milder, but not so that one could to sit outdoors. My room is still cold at 9 degrees R. My remaining sawdust is frozen and when it unfreezes it will be wet, yielding very little heat. Thus, I am still not able to invite you to visit me.

Nothing much to report. What little meat is available is of inferior quality. But thanks to Rosa, my meals are still tasty.

Health wise I am all right, my rest-cure suited me well. Now I have to exercise my rusty legs by taking walks, and to shave my full beard before Easter.

The building of the extension will wait till Easter (*never done*). The big clearing was added to the Dairy, so that Fritsche** will have 400 hectars to manage!!

Attached a letter from aunt Guetia.

Best greeting to you all

Papa

* *Hans was in prison, in isolation in Germany.*

** *Fritsche, a German Nazi was the engineer in charge of the electric work. He reported my grandfather to the authorities, which led to his arrest and death in Treblinka. The Czech villagers might have left him alone in his house in the woods.*

This letter, in pencil and difficult to read, was among the things we were able to save after the Russian plundering.

Taikowitz 31/3 1942

Mon Cher Alfred,

Please thank Guétia for her letter; the good news she gave me pleased me a lot. Mädi, who spent a few days with her parents in Vienna, went to see Karl* who was sick with bronchitis. Fortunately he is well cared for. But Mädi fears that he will not recover. One really does not know what to wish for him.

As far as I am concerned, I am perfectly well. I am waiting impatiently for spring to arrive and with spring I will have a visit from Mädi, As it is impossible for me to get the Exit Permit, I am asking you if you could find out whether it is possible to prolong for one year the permit to enter Switzerland; mine is expiring in May.

Otherwise nothing more to tell,
Amitiées à tout le monde

Tibi Bob

**Karl Mayer, Bob's brother in law, father of Franzl Mayer, who had escaped from Vienna with his wife and two sons.*

This letter to his brother Alfred. He and his wife Guetia lived in Basel with some of her relatives. They were the hub for spreading news in all directions to other relatives who could not be reached directly. Also, they tried to get Bob too join them.

Last letter

May 18, 1942

Dear Berty,

Best thanks for letter and newspaper cuttings. Newspapers and absolutely **nothing** seems to be allowed. (Nothing, not even letters) In six hours I will vanish; when will there be a reunion (*Wiedersehen*) or a (*Wiederhören*)? It is in God's hand. I cannot write more today, as I still have much to put in order.

Greetings from me to Wolfgang and Hans.

I wish you all the best.

Bob

This is the last letter or communication we had from my grandfather. He became a number like all deported Jews in the camps, and disappeared in the vast masses of the victims of the Holocaust.

The End

I seem to remember that my mother visited him once during spring. All his letters to her, except the one here, were lost. It must have been hard for them to say good bye, since their bond had grown very close. My mother respected him more than her own father. I do not know how and when exactly he was advised about his sudden deportation. We know from Rosa and Stázi, who helped of pack and that he left the house on May 18, 1942.

My grandfather was 74 years old, upright, in good health, with a backpack (*Rucksack*) on his shoulder, and his ever present cane in his hand. It was Rosa, our beloved cook who stayed with him and cared for him most of his life, who bid him good-bye. They had a last fight about a copper bowl used for beating egg whites, which he thought would be useful for washing. She yielded, and it was strapped to his backpack. Stázi also came to say good bye. None of us ever saw him again.

We learned that he was taken by someone from the village to the main road. From there he walked to Třebice, carrying a suitcase and his cane. The transport left from Třebice, where an official collection camp (*Sammellager*) with a significant Jewish population was established. There, he became a number, and left with 651 other Jews on May 22nd by transport nr. 284, to Theresienstadt. Checking the whole list, I found familiar names, but do not think there was anybody my grandfather might have known. Entire families were on the list; however, my grandfather was alone. Only nineteen people from this transport survived.

Theresienstadt or *Terezín* was an old fortified town in northern Bohemia

built in 1780 by the Austrian army as protection against a Prussian invasion. It was named by the Emperor Joseph in honor of his mother, the Empress Maria Theresia. It was Reinhard Heydrich, the vile and brutal Reichsprotector, who chose and established Theresienstadt as concentration camp. It served as a so-called "*Sammellager*" (collection camp), which was the last station before the prisoners were sent to the extermination camps in the East. It was at the Wannsee conference in January 1942 that the fate of the Jews, the Final Solution was decided on. Theresienstadt was a **Nazi strategy of deception**. The Ghetto was in reality the collection center for deportations to the ghettos and killing stations in Nazi occupied Eastern Europe. After a humiliating train ride from Trebitsch (usually in box cars), arriving in Theresienstadt must have been the first terrible shock of the horror that awaited my grandfather. Thanks and according to H. G. Adler's painstaking account of life and death in Theresienstadt, we know a great deal about what happened when inmates arrived at Station Bohušovice. Wearing their numbered labels and carrying their luggage, the inmates had to walk about three kilometers without food or drink to reach a station which separated them from their possessions. With typical Nazi humor, that station was known as the *Schleuse* or Filter. This was the first taste of cruel, baseless humiliation, making the prisoners feeling utterly helpless and abandoned. Then they were assigned to the old military barracks which became their over-crowded living quarters. Food was scarce and often inedible.

Since the Theresienstadt ghetto was constantly overfilled, plans for sending transports to the East began early in 1942. Older inmates were selected to go first ("*Überalterung*"). While no-one knew at first the true nature of the horrors that awaited them, those transports were feared from the beginning. Somehow, the last message my mother got from there was: "The old hunting dog (*Jagdhund*) from Taikowitz is here as well". Then there was a blackout till

after the war, when we got the “official” postcard informing us about the transport Nr. Bw 932 on October 19th 1942 that took him to Treblinka. We will never know about my grandfather’s last journey, his feelings, his discomfort, his fears, only imagining the horror of it all?

What follows, are loosely copied quotes from Richard Glazar’s book “Trap with a Green Fence”: Everything was run by the SS troops. The locomotive slowly pushes the cars through the gate, stopping at a platform. Then, as everybody is getting out, people are led from the platform to the “*Entkleidungsplatz*” the disrobing place. That area is enclosed by a green fence where they were ordered to undress for delousing. The naked women and children were led to the “*Friseurstube*,” the hair salon, where their hair was cut off. Women’s hair was used for insulating purposes (among others in U-Boats). The men were also ordered to undress and then had to stack their hand luggage in a corner. The SS shouted for everybody to trot. Together, everyone—the shorn women and children and the panting men—were driven through the “*Schlauch*,” the “*Pipeline*,” into the second section of the camp. This was a narrow alley enclosed by barbed wire, resembling the passageway through which wild animals were released to an arena. But this alley is longer and curves in such a way that it is impossible to see from the beginning to the end. For the most part the barbed wire was covered with green pine branches. On the dividing line between the two parts of the camp, built inside the “*Pipeline*”, there was a small office, a depository for valuables known as “*kleine Kasse*” (cash register). At the window of this small wooden shed everyone was required to hand over all papers, watches and jewelry. Everybody was robbed of his name and another piece of his naked anonymous life. The last stop was the “showers” and we all know this was the end. Treblinka worked like a conveyor belt, a continuous process.

Walking toward these gates, I think, my grandfather was intelligent to know that this was the end. One has to wonder whether he broke down or walked through the gates of Treblinka erect, leaning on his cane? When I think of my upright, fastidious, dignified grandfather, tall and always carefully groomed, going naked through this cruel and humiliating process, I cannot but wonder what he was thinking about? His wife, who fortunately was spared by her sudden death, his far away children, his beloved Taikowitz, or were his senses stunned by disbelief, by the horror of the cruelty of his end? However, the purpose of this book is my feeling that we do owe remembrance to our grandfather, this honorable, kind man, recognizing what he went through and **do not forget!** The unparalleled brutality and degradation that he (and so many others) had to suffer before he died. He was not the only one of his brothers who died at the hand of the Nazis. His brother André who lived in Paris, was arrested and deported as well. However, they died not knowing each other's fate.

All communication had stopped in 1942. At the time, hardly anybody knew the full extent of the horror that awaited the Jewish population. While one expected the worst, the monstrous atrocities went beyond anybody's imagination. Hitler's insane hatred of the Jews and the collaboration of his brutal henchmen will be forever the darkest blemish in German history. It was only after the war that the full extent of the horrifying truth was revealed. And till today it occupies historians, novelists as well as film-makers, trying to understand what cannot be fathomed.

Illustrations

25.VIII, 1941.

Lieber Niki,

Deine Mama ist nicht mehr, es ist dies der schwerste Schlag der uns treffen konnte; und der einzige Trost, der uns bleibt, ist dass sie schmerzlos und ohne sich schwer krank zu fuehlen von uns gegangen ist. Fuer mich war es wie ein Blitz aus heiterem Himmel, denn gerade in der letzten Zeit war sie wohler denn je und weder ich noch die Aerzte koennen ergruenden aus welcher Ursache sich ploetzlich eine Gehirnentzuendung entwickeln konnte. es wird immer ein Raetsel bleiben. Noch am Mittwoch den 16ten Abend war sie nach den gewohnten Spaziergaengen bei bestem Appetit und in sehr guter Stimmung. Donnerstag frueh klagte sie ueber Brechreiz und Fieberge-fuehl, die Temperatur war gegen 38 und sie sagte ich habe mich gestern wohl etwas ueberessen und das ist nun die Strafe fuer meine Unmaessigkeit. Als Nachmittag die Temperatur auf 39 stieg liess ich sofort unseren sehr tuechtigen Arzt rufen, der Mama gruendlichst untersuchte, jedoch alle Organe und Funktionen in bester Ordnung fand. Freitag frueh war, nach Darm-spuelung, die Temperatur auf 38.2 gefallen. Mama fuehlte keinen Brechreiz mehr, hatte keinerlei Schmerzen, sagte nur, dass sie sich aehnlich schlech fuehle, wie bei den Masern, und dass ihre Haende und Fuesse wie Watt a sei-en und dass sie ihr Gebetbuch nicht lesen keenne, weil die Buchstaben tanz-ten. Als Mittag die Temperatur ueber 39 stieg, schickte ich neuerlich um den Arzt, der aber wiederum nichts bedenkliches constatieren konnte und kalte Wickel verordnete. Samstag frueh war der Zustand bei 38.5 unveraendert und sprach Mama den Wunsch aus, da die Pflege hier schwierig waere und sie nicht glaube, dass ihr Unwohlsein sobald voruebergehen werde, am Sonntag ins Krankenhaus nach Treb. ueberfuehrt zu werden. Gegen Mittag stieg das Fieber ploetzlich auf 39.5 an. Der Ruecken wurde steif und Mama sagte, dass ihre Fuesse wie Blei seien. Der Doktor war sich noch immer nicht klar ueber die Ursache des Fiebers, veranlasste aber fuer Abend die Ueberfuehrung nach T. Gegen 5 Uhr nahm die Beweglichkeit weiter ab, auch die Sprache wurde schwer, Mama bat mich sie aufzusetzen, was schon sehr schwer ging; als es gelingen war, schloss sie die Augen und murmelte durch ein paar Minuten ihre gewohnten Gebete, dann war sie einige Minuten still und liess sich wieder von mir hinlegen, laechelte mich an und sagte "Du bist so lieb". Nach einigen Minuten begann sie etwas confus von Maedi, B.E., und allen anderen Kindern zu sprechen, ohne dass ich den Sinn erfas-sen konnte, nur weiss ich dass es angenehme Vorstellungen waren, da der Gesichtsausdruck ruhig und laechelnd war. Dann verlor sie das Bewusstsein als sie weggefuehrt wurde, erkannte sie mich nicht mehr. Der Doktor be-gleitete den Transport und veranlasste alles erdenkliche. Maedi fand sie am Sonntag bewusstlos und ruhig, und Montag trat die Katastrophe ein. Sie war Sonntag versehen worden. Das Leichenbegaengniss fand Donnerstag durch Dechant Hasek von O.D. statt; Pfarrer Otruba las die Seelenmesse. Die Be-teiligung der Bevoelkerung war sehr gross. Jetzt ruht sie an der Seite ih-res lieben Leo, dessen Grab sie so oft besuchte. Jetzt ist gerade noch ein Platz fuer mich dort. Ueber mich brauchst Du Dir keine Sorgen zu machen. Maedi, die mir in den schweren Tagen sehr lieb zur Seite gestanden ist, hat mich wieder aufgerichtet und ich habe ihr versprochen brav zu sein, meine Pflicht, den Contact mit der Familie aufrechtzuerhalten, zu tun und auch auf mich zu achten. Physisch geht es mir sehr gut, materiell weisst Du, dass ich versorgt bin; die Wirtschaft fuehrt die alte Rosa mir, mit einer halbtaegigen Hausgehilfin ausgezeichnet. Auch vor Langweile fuerchte ich mich nicht, ich interessiere mich fuer alles was vorgeht und das ist leider nicht wenig; wie alles ausgehen wird kann niemand voraussehen. Wer-de ich meine Tage hier beschliessen oder wirst Du mich einmal abholen

kommen? Es steht in Gottes Hand. Dieser Brief ist auch fuer Deine Brueder bestimmt. Ich bin fest ueberzeugt, dass Ihr trotz aller Widrigkeiten Euern Weg machen werdet. Und nun fur heute Schluss.

Papa.

P.S. Bitte schreibe mir moeglichst oft. Ich erwarte naechste Woche den Besuch von Maedi's Eltern, die mir ein paar Tage ihres Urlaubes opfern wollen und bei Kepka wohnen werden. Ich freue mich sehr auf sie. Auch Maedi kommt Mitte September Mama's Sachen mit mir durchzugehen. Von Eri habe ich sehr zufriedene Nachrichten.

19.IX.1941.

Lieber Niki,

Obgleich ich Dir erst vor einigen Tagen geschrieben habe, habe ich heute das Beduerfniss ein wenig mit Dir zu plaudern. Ich hoffe, dass Du meine zwei Briefe puenktlich erhalten hast, und dass Du aus diesen gesehen hast, wie gleicher Stimmung wir beide sind.

Du kannst ganz beruhigt sein, dass ich trachten werde trotz allem meinen Optimismus insofern zu behalten, dass ich an ein Wiedersehen mit Euch fest glaube.

Ich hatte vorige Woch den Besuch Berty's, die in der Kueche 2 Naechte schlieff. Dieser Besuch hat mir sehr wohlgetaen; vielleicht hat Berty schon Louise geschrieben, dass sie mich sehr wohl verfand und dass wir uns in unseren Ideen sehr gut verstanden. In acht oder vierzehn Tagen kommt Maedi auf zwei Tage her um Mama's Sachen in Ordnung zu bringen. Ich freue mich schon sehr auf diesen Besuch, der wohl bis zum Fruehjahr der der letzte sein wird, den ich hier erwarten kann.

Ich selbst bin an T. gebunden, fuerchte mich aber gar nicht vor dem Winter, denn ich habe ja in den neunziger Jahren viele Winter allein am Lande verbracht, und war dies in der jagdlosen Schenzeit, Janua bis April, auch nicht viel anders, und Rosa verpflegt mich wie damals schon, auch jetzt sehr gut. Dann ist auch die Erinnerung an Mama fortwahrend um mich, und ausserdem bin ich in Gedanken fortwahrend bei Euch Buben. Wenn ich die Zeitungen lese trachte ich zu erraten, wie sich die Ereignisse wohl auf jeden von Euch auswirken moegen. So, und unter kleinen haeuslichen Sorgen und auch manchen in solchen Zeiten unvermeidlichen Unannehmlichkeiten vergeht der Tag ziemlich rasch. Spazierengehen ist mir kein Beduerfniss, da ich meinen ehemaligen Wald vom Fenster aus sehe und mich freue wie meine Kulturen gedeihen. Meine Mama & Grossmama, Onkel Kobi, Tante Emilie sind nach ihrem 65ten Jahre auch nicht mehr vom Hause weggegangen und doch achtzig Jahre und darueber geworden.

Von Erich habe ich lange nichts gehoert, erheffe aber in den naechsten Tagen eine Antwort auf meinen Brief, in dem ich ihm die traurige Nachricht sandte, zu erhalten. Er schrieb noch an Mama, dass es ihm sehr gut gehe. Onkel Karl geht es recht gut, von allen anderen hoerst Du ja durch Louise.

Ich hoffe bald wieder Deine Schrift zu sehen; alles interessiert mich. Wuensche Dir weiter gute Erfolge.

Mit besten Gruessen auch an Louise und Max

PAPA

Letter 1

Teil Nov. 25/11/1941

Liebe Bartsi

Meinen besten Dank für Eure Beileidstelegramme und dafür das Ihr es übernommen habt, Karl von dem schweren Schlag für uns alle getroffen zu verständigen. Ich war mir in diesen schweren Tagen eine grosse Hilfe, ohne sie wäre ich ganz hilflos gewesen. Sie hat mich aufgerichtet und fühlte ich heute schon, dass ich nach dem vielen

was ich durchgemacht habe, auch diesen schwersten Schlag in Ergebenheit tragen werde. Dein Herz geht mehr ist, was ich traukte, unsere früher so vereinigte Familie, sonst zusammenzuhalten, das wenn einmal Frieder kommt, es vielleicht doch noch einen Familientag geben wird.

Ich freue mich schon riesig auf Euren Besuch, derselbe wird mir eine wahre Wohltat sein. Bartsi Grüsse auch Barbara und Leo

Boly

Fran Barty von Heitfeld - Krenegg

IV Wohlbenegasse 7

Wien

Letter 2

Liebe Borty.

Besten Dank für
Deinen Brief. Seit
Deiner Abfahrt hatte
ich eine wenig ange-
nommene Besuch, der
aber Raum weitere
Folge habe dürfte.
Nach die neuen Ver-
ordnungen ist nicht

angenehm, aber nach einigen Tagen Verständigung
bin ich wieder im Freiheit. Für den
warm Danzig wäre es sehr schmacklich gewesen
wieder nach Böckowitz nach Brünn
zu dürfen. Von Erdt bin ich schon lange
ohne Nachricht. Degegen habe ich von Allen
unseren Baben nur erfreuliches gehört. Ich wäre
Dir dankbar, wenn Du in Erfahrung bringen
könntest, wann ich mit der nächsten Rute
an der Tr. reisen darf.
Bate Dirne Dir aus Wolf von Einsiedler.
Boh

Jan. 20th 1971.

Liebe Party

Ich habe lange nicht geschrieben, weil Du ja ^{es} durch
Mädi Nachricht hattest und ich hier auch nichts
erwagte hat. Ich erhielt eben von Mädi
ein paar Zeilen, denen ich entnehme, dass Wolfgang
nich ⁱⁿ die Entscheidung der Woche befreien möchte, wenn er
Dankbarkeit erhält. Du weinst wie ich mich auf
diesen Bereich freue, auch die Sache soll bis dahin
fertig werden; ich muss es jedoch Wolf über-
lassen, ob er ⁱⁿ zurück ^{do} deren Verantwortung me soll ist.
Instande, in meinen dann traut. Hier ist
alles ruhig, ich lebe so wie sonst, bin gut
versorgt, aber halte mich noch mehr von
allern und allem zurück. Freunde verlieren das
Dienst bei mir; sie wurde im Schloss gewünscht.
Die Nachbarin mit Rose helfen sich gegenseitig
und es geht der besser wie früher.
Die Königsberichte aus Rostland überraschen

mir nicht, ich halte ähnliches erwartet. Es ist jetzt nur die Frage, wie sich die Anglo-Sachsen jetzt herausdrücken werden und ob die Welt nicht doch noch zur Vernunft kommt. Ich sehe der Zukunft ruhig und gefestt entgegen, habe ich doch von allen meinen Brüdern gute Nachrichten und ebenso von meinen Brüdern und meiner Schwester, die mir alle schon zweimal schrieben.

Bitte teile mir aldmöglichst mit ob ich auf Wolfgang rechnen darf und auf ~~der~~ welchem Wege & eintreffen würde.

Mit bestem Grüne

Bely

Von der Freiheit, s.s. erhält ich das erwartete
Beste Dank für Deine Bemerkung.

Wann kommt Eri zu Euri? Ich habe heute
an Park geschriften wie gehts ihm? Ist
nur keine Sturzflut den dann bald vorüber
wird?

R

Tambructz 23/VI 1941.

Liebe Berty.

Ich danke Dir bestens für die zwei letzten Nummern des "Reichs"; dieselbe sind gerade in eine bildarme Periode heringekommen und haben mich sehr interessiert. Ich habe auch den Artikel von S. über die ~~St.~~ gelesen und mich gefragt warum dem Leserkreis des Reichs dieser Artikel vorgesetzt werden musste?

Ich habe der lange nicht geschränkt, weil von hier wirklich nichts zu berichten ist, was Du nicht sowieso aus den Zeitungen erhebst; dann die hiesigen Vorfälle mit auch eine zeitlang etwas aus meiner Ruhe aufgerüttelt habe, nicht Du mir gern glauben; es ist nicht gerade gewöhnlich vor der Amtstätte zu stehen, den Pickelhaken Rücken und den Stock in der Hand im Ungezogene wandern zu müssen. Seitdem habe ich aber mein Stierkopf wieder gefunden, mir alles auch den Schleimhauten in der Phantasia ausgenutzt, bin auf alles gefasst, habe aber viele Gründe zu glauben dass aber für mich hier kein Altan bleiben wird.

und lassen Sie mir Dernthal so gut wie möglich geben.
 Rosa verabschiedet mich weiter; und Sie ist mit der
 Verzögerung. Das Paket nicht mehr so leicht wie
 im Sommer, aber mir kommen gut durch.
 Von meinen Kindern und Geschwistern habe ich
 durchwegs gute Nachrichten, nur Bussel
 (der Sohn Hermanns) musste an seiner Wand
 merklich spaziert wandern, es ist aber Hoffnung
 das es nicht all zu lange dauern wird. Bitte
 gib mir bald Nachricht wie es Hans geht.
 Mit Freude bin ich in regelmäßigen Briefwechsel
 ich Romeo ihr fast wahrhaft näher. Es ist
 nun schon zwei Monate her, dass ich sie geschenkt
 habe und wird wohl noch vier Monate dauern
 sie sie in die Wildnis. Rauscht. Seit 14 Tagen
 haben wir nichts wie Nebel, ich halte oft bis
 über Mittag Winter schlaf, bin aber pünktlich
 gerund und nehme das noch zu. Wie geht es
 auch Ihnen und was macht Paul?

Beste Grüße

Böhl

Letter 5

Liebe Berty.

Besten Dank für Deinen Brief. Ich hoffe Ihr habt angenehme Tage in Langenlois verbracht, und sende Euch meine besten Neujahrsgrüße.
Hier war es an Weihnachten sehr einsam; Rosa hat mir einen ganz kleinen Baum aufgerichtet, unter dem ich alle Photographien meiner Kinder und Enkel stellte, weil an alle besondere an René dachte; ob und wann ich sie wiedersehen werde ist noch ganz ungewiss; verläufig werde ich versuchen die Ausreise- Genehmigung nach der Schweiz für das Frühjahr zu ergattern; bis wegen Dar noch nicht abgesetzte Steuerfrage noch gerichtet ist ob es gelingen wird. Vielleicht wird man auch vor Dar Krieg anbelangt bis Dekr etwas Klärung geben; jetzt kann wohl niemand sich ein Urteil erlauben, wie lange der Krieg noch dauern wird.

Von hier nichts neues zu berichten; es geht alles sein normales Tempo; ich schlafe und esse viel.

Besten Dank für das Buch was mich sehr interessierte. Schreibe mir bald wieder
Beste Grüsse Euch Berty B.

Letter 6 Page 1

Taranto 11/12 1942

Liebe Betty

Besten Dank für Deinen Brief vom 8^{ta}. Hoffentlich wird sich Wolf bald ganz erholen, sollte er nicht einen Hrolaub nehmen und sich in Sangerlois, bei guter Landkost Ruieren? Wer kann anbelangen bin ich sehr traurig, dass er soviel leiden muss, und hoffe für ihn, dass das Frühjahr Erleichterung bringt wird. Heute ist zum ersten Mal seit sechs Wochen, das Thermometer über Null gestiegen. Wir hatten hier jede Nacht zwischen Schölf und fünf und zwanzig Grad R. unter Null; so dass mein Ofen, zumal Sägspäne Knapp, nicht nachkommt. Ich habe mir infolge dessen eine Liegekur vorgenommen und fühlte mich im Bett ausgesiednet. Rosa ist in die Rüde übersiedelt und Rothe weiter ausgeziednet; mit der Verprovozierung geht es noch passabel, obgleich ich selbst als "sterken Ein- und Auskünften unterliege, wurde ich doch von vielen Seiten verwöhnt. Es gibt Dich noch anhängliche und denkbare Leute,

Ih bin ganz Deiner Ansicht, dass es noch lange dauern wird, ehe das Leben wieder normal wird. Aber Raum gibt nur an die allernächste Zeit Denken und muss froh sein wenn man in Ruhe und ohne Hunger auf seine Platz bleiben kann. Meine Einreisebenatlizierung in die Schweiz ist bis Mai verlängert, aber ich zweifle, ob ich die Erlaubnis zur Autoreise bekomme. Vielleicht ist es besser so; da ich bei böne, dass eine Umwidlung, bei meinem Alter nicht in Betracht kommt, umso mehr als ich hier ganz abgesondert wohne.

Daisy hätte unter den jetzigen Verhältnissen sehr gelitten; ich weiss nicht ob Du gehört hast, dass hier die T. ihrer Wohnung nicht verlassen dürfen. Ich darf nicht einmal nach Böhmarowitz und in den Solans-Rositzer Wald, der gleich hinter dem Hause liegt.

Somit nichts zu berichten.

Beste Grüsse Dir und Wolf

Bog

Letter to Maedi Page 1

Postkarte 31/III 42

Liebe Maedi

Besten Dank für den von Dir Brief vom 24.- Ich bin so froh, dass Dir die Reise nicht gescheitert ist, und dass Du Hany relativ gut angebroffen hast. Die Kursteuerungen in Wien, werden Dich wohl etwas aufgefrischt haben. Das Los des armen D. Paul ist sehr traurig; gut ist nur, dass er wenigstens gute Pflege hat. Ich fürchte das er sich schwerlich erhalten wird; man weiß wirklich nicht, was man wünschen soll.

Hier ist es seit einigen Tagen etwas milder, aber noch nicht so, dass ich Draußen sitzen könnte. Das Zimmer ist bei 9° R. immer noch kalt. Die Sägespäne die ich noch habe, sind vom Boden aus gefroren; wenn dieselben auftauen sind sie feucht und geben wenig Wärme; also kann ich Dich noch immer nicht bitten, mich zu besuchen.

Letter to Maedi Page 2

Neues nicht viel zu berichten; Fleisch der Knapp und minder; mein Essen aber, dank Rosa, immer noch schmaakhaft.

Geundheitlich bin ich allright; meine Restaure ist mir sehr gut bekommen; jetzt muss ich meine etwas zerstörten Beine darin Spazierengehen wieder gelenkig machen, und mir vor Ostern meinen Vollbart abnehmen lassen.

Mit Dom-Werden wird erst nach Ostern begonnen werden; Der grosse Schlag ist zum Meierhof zurückgekehrt; so dass Fritsche jetzt gegen 400 Hektaren bewirtschaftet wird!!

Ballegard Brief Tante Suetian.

Beste Grüsse Euch allen

Papay

Last letter before deportation

18/V 1942

Liebe Party

Besten Dank für Brief und Familienzeitungen und überhaupt nichts (auch keine Briefe) erhalten erhalten. In sechs Stunden tanke ich unter; wann wird es ein Wiederschen oder ein Wiederkommen geben. Es steht in Gottes Hand. Ich kann heute nicht mehr schreiben, weil ich zu viel noch zu ordnen habe

Grüße Wolfgang und Hans von mir
Ich wünsche Dir alles Gute.

Boh

Letter to his brother Alfred

Taynourte 31/III 1942

Mon cher Alfred

Je te prie de remercier Saitin de sa lettre; les bonnes nouvelles qu'elle me donnees m'ont fait plaisir. Mädi, qui a passé quelques jours avec ses parents à Vienne, a été voir Karl, qui a été malade d'une bronchite; il a heureusement tous les soins qu'il lui faut, mais Mädi craint qu'il ne se remettra plus; on ne sait vraiment pas ce que l'on doit espérer pour lui.

Quant à moi je suis toujours parfaitement bien; mais j'attends le printemps avec un peu d'impatience et avec le printemps la visite de Mädi.

Comme il n'est pas possible pour le moment d'obtenir un permis de sortie, je te prie de bien vouloir t'informer s'il y a moyen de prolonger mon permis d'entrée qui expire le 10 mai d'un mois six mois?

Sien rien à raconter

Amicabillement à tout le moins. Tili

②

Letter to Wolfgang (April 1928)

SCHLOSS TAIKOWITZ
MÄHREN

11 April 1928

1928

Geauchte Meine

Lieber Wolfgang

Hente haben uns Mädi und René mit der Nachricht überrascht, dass sie sich einander vor einigen Tagen fürs Leben versprochen haben. Ich glaube Ihr wandet über dieses Ereignis dieselbe Freude empfindet, die uns hier alle berecht. Ich brauche Dir nicht zu sagen wie glücklich Daisy ist, Ihre geliebte Mädi mit René verlost zu sehen. Ich habe Sie seit jenen schrecklichen Sonnitage hente zum erstenmal voll glücklich geschen.

Ich glaube Euch versichern zu können, dass alle Voraussetzungen gegeben sind, dass Mädi und René einer schönen, tapferen und gesideten Zukunft entgegen gehen, und hoffe, dass unser Haus, das auch Mädis Haus werden soll, Euch oft begrüssen wird und dass Ihr in unseren nur freien Wäldern manch vergnügten Tag verleben werdet, wann dieselben auch nicht so blau und luftig sind wie der Böhmerwald.

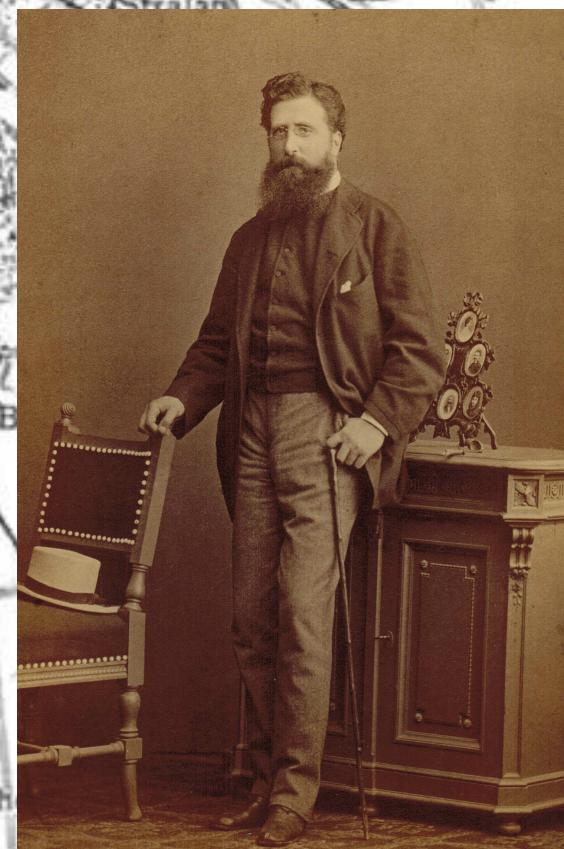
Alles herzliche von uns allen an Euch alle

Dien auf fröhlicher Bob Goldschmidt

Bob as a child



Ottilie nee Przibram



B.H. Goldschmidt

BERLIN
and Environs.

Scale, 1:145,000

English Miles

0 1/4 1/2 1 1/2 2 1/2 3 1/2 4 1/2 5 1/2 6 1/2 7 1/2 8 1/2 9 1/2 10 1/2

Mahlow

Wassmannsdorf



Ottile Przibram as a child with her siblings



Bonne Maman



Przibrams in Prague and Liblin

COLLECTION
GOLDSCHMIDT-PRZIBRAM
DE BRUXELLES

CATALOGUE

DES

TABLEAUX - SCULPTURES - BRONZES
EAUX-FORTES DE REMBRANDT - BIJOUX
MÉDAILLES - ÉMAUX DE LIMOGES
MEUBLES - TAPISSERIES - PENDULES
PORCELAINES DE VIENNE ET DE SAXE, ETC.

DONT LA VENTE AUX ENCHÈRES PUBLIQUES
APRÈS DÉCÈS DE MADAME OTTILIE GOLDSCHMIDT
ET
À LA REQUÊTE DU MANDATAIRE DE LA FAMILLE
AURA LIEU À AMSTERDAM

GALERIE FREDERIK MULLER & C^{IE}
16-18 DOELEN STRAAT
LES MARDI, MERCREDI ET JEUDI, 17, 18, 19 JUIN, 1924

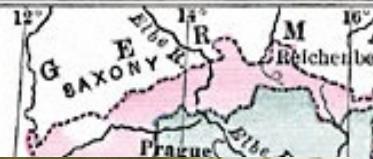
SOUS LA DIRECTION DE
A N T. W. M. M E N S I N G
(FREDERIK MULLER & C^{IE})

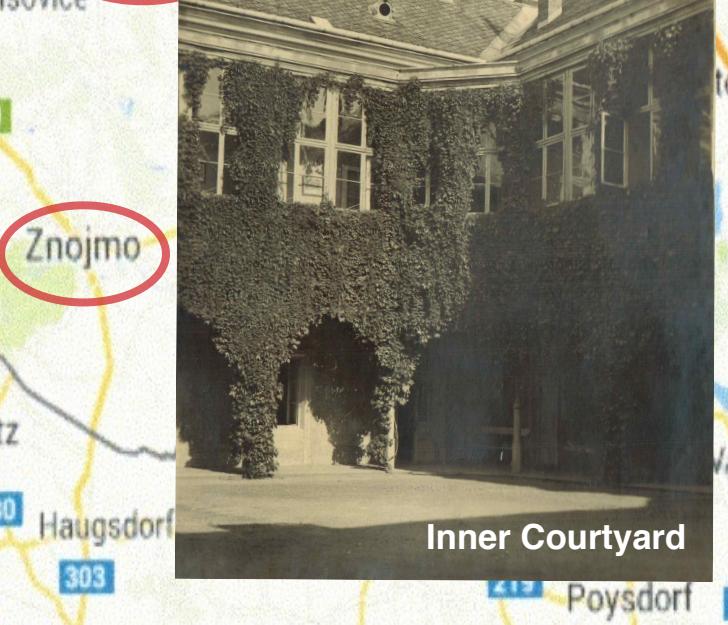
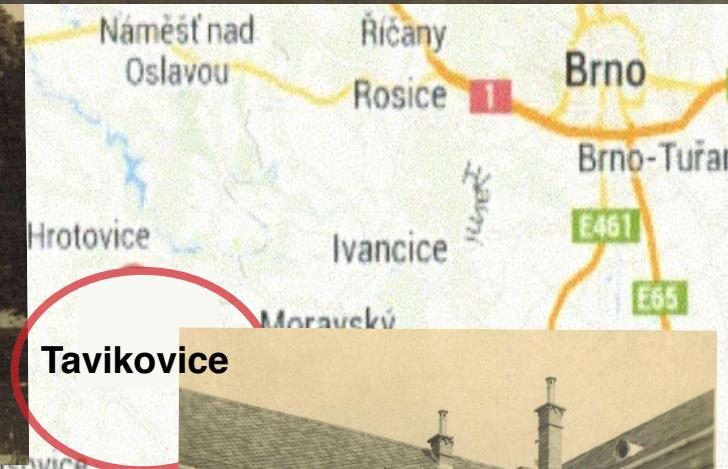
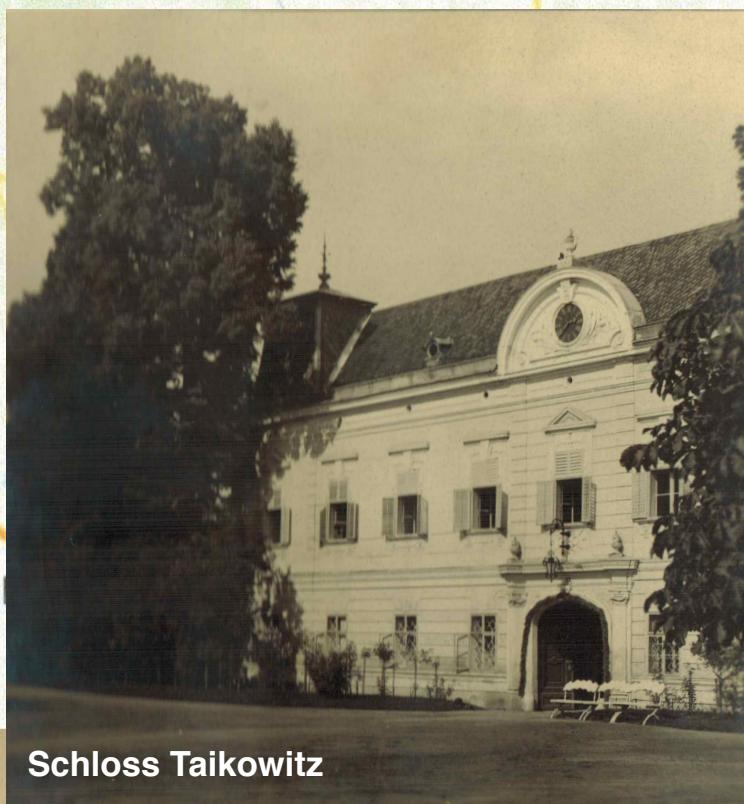
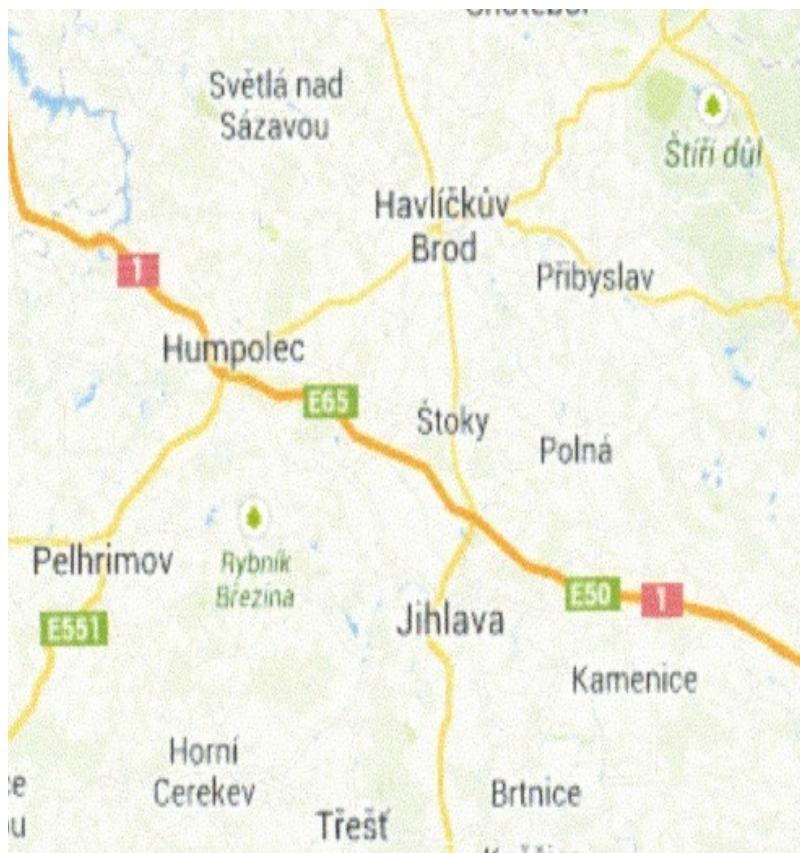
Engagement 1899



AUSTRIA HUNGARY
1914

Scale of Miles







The Goldschmidt Family



Outdoor Life in Taikowitz

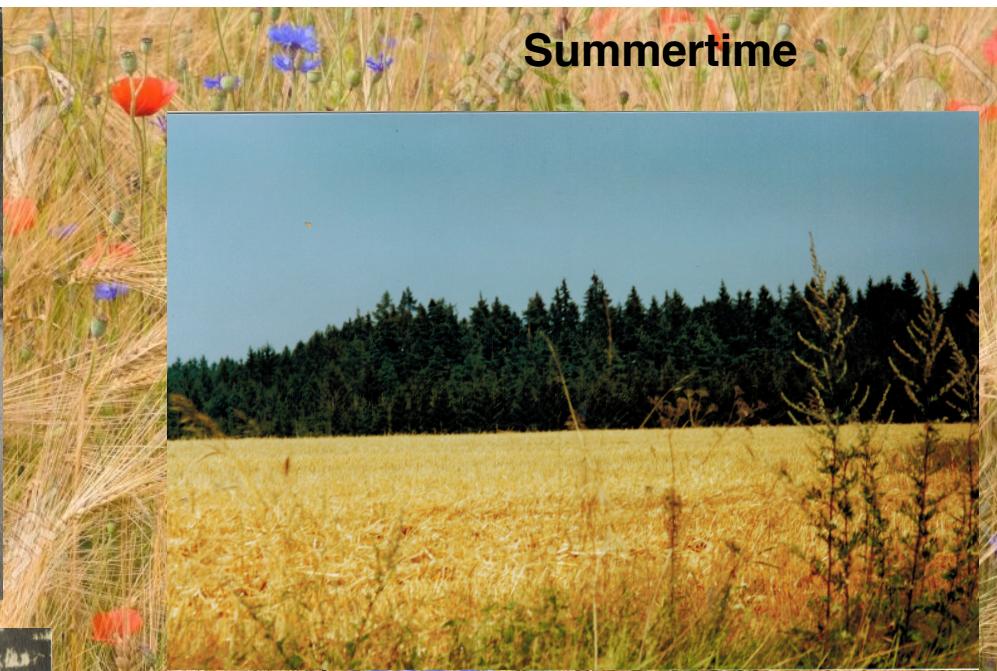


Christmas 1908

Bob and Daisy with their sons



Summertime



Czech national costume

Wintertime





Niki



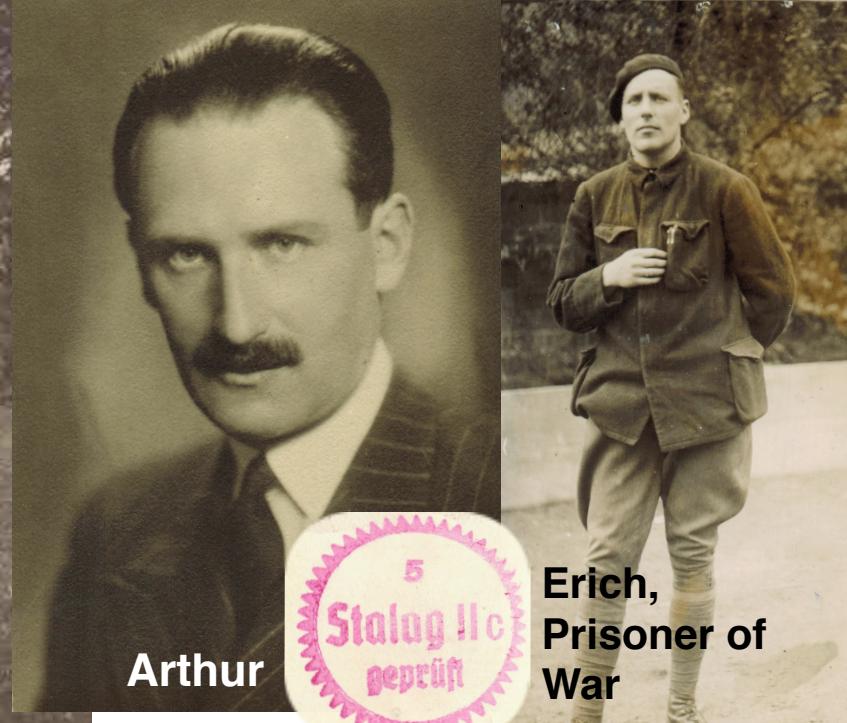
René, Leo, Ernst, Niki, Erich



Leo



René



Arthur

Erich,
Prisoner of
War



Life in Gamekeeper Cottage



Fanda and Rosa



Bob, Daisy and Stutzi





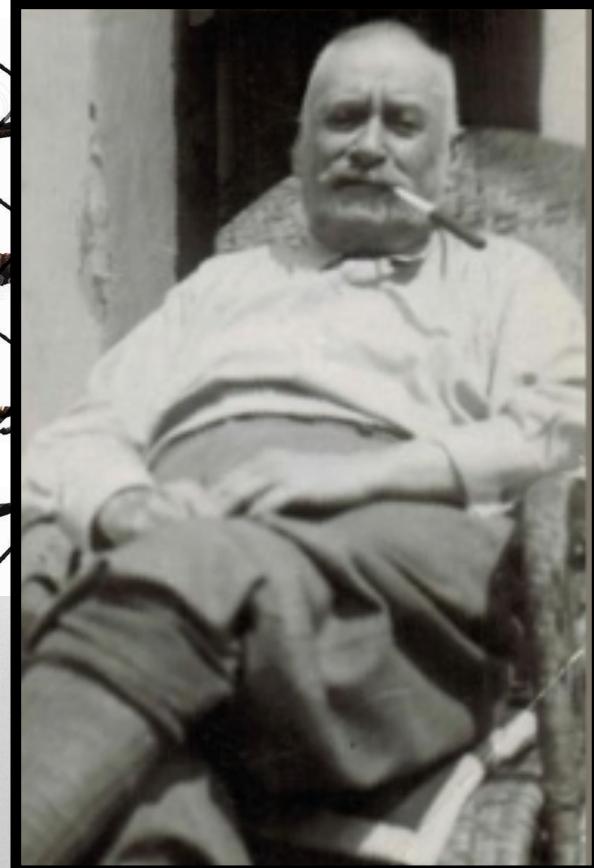
Daisy † August 18th, 1941



Bob leaves Taikowitz - May 18th, 1942



Theresienstadt



October 1942



ÚSTŘEDNÍ KARTOTÉKA — TRANSPORTY.

R. č. 99.663

Goldschmidt Robert

Adresa před deportací: 10.6. 1868
Távíkovice 57

1. transport	2. transport
dne: 22. V. 1942	dne: 19. X. 1942
číslo: Bw 932	do: Treblinky
e. 284	

Notification of Bob's Deportation to Treblinka

Theresienstadt
"jemals ver-
gessen, fässt
— fässt in
Verbrechen —
wie dieses! —

4. Mai 65

⑧ Münichaw.
— MEINHARD —

**"Theresienstadt" ever to forget, that would be
nearly as much a crime as this one!**

Thank You



With gratitude to our grandparents from their grandchildren, those who remember and those who cannot. For children, Taikowitz was a paradise, teaching us the beauty of nature and giving us a solid sense of values that supported us throughout life.

Marion, Yvette, Renate, Brigitte, Leo, Paul, Sylvia and René

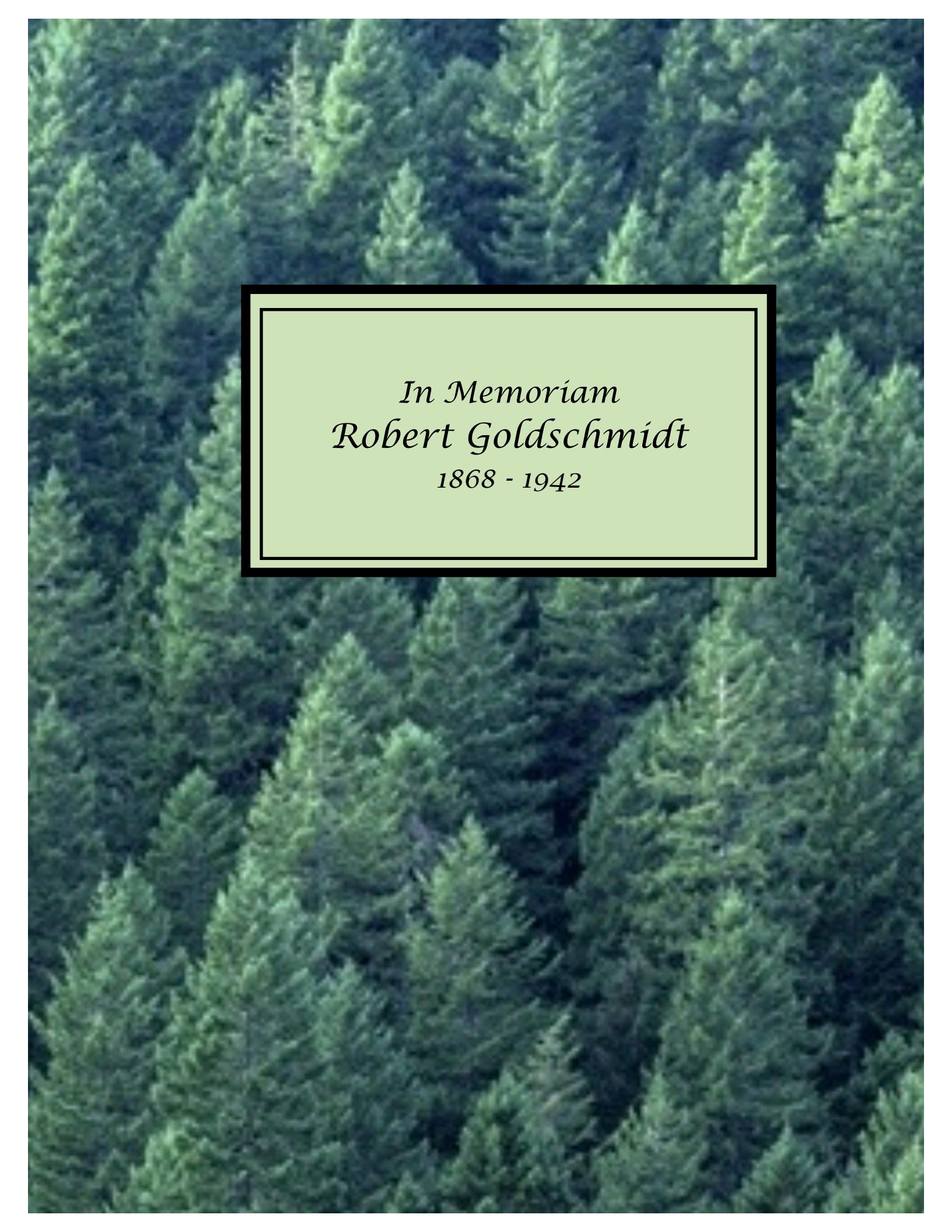




Acknowledgements

My thanks go first to my mother and grandmother Berty for having saved all these letters and passed them on to me, as well as documents, photos and all the diaries of my grandmother Daisy. They inspired me to put this book together, with the help of computer wizard Sara Malamut, and my dear, proof-reader John Kallir. Thank you both!

NYC August 2017



In Memoriam
Robert Goldschmidt
1868 - 1942